

**FALSTAFF: A  
LYRICAL COMEDY  
IN THREE ACTS**

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Falstaff: A Lyrical Comedy in Three Acts by Arrigo Boito & W. Beatty Kingston & Giuseppe Verdi

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**ARRIGO BOITO & W. BEATTY KINGSTON & GIUSEPPE VERDI**

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IN THREE ACTS**



# FALSTAFF

A LYRICAL COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

ARRIGO BOITO

(English Version by W. Beatty Kingston)

MUSIC BY

GIUSEPPE VERDI

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## SYNOPSIS

### SCENE I

Falstaff is seen enjoying himself in his inn at Windsor, attended by Bardolph and Pistol. He has just written a couple of love letters to two sprightly gentlewomen of the town, Mistress Ford and Mistress Page. Neither of his attendants cares to play the part of go-between in the affair, and a boy, Robin, is sent to bear the missives. Enter Dr. Caius, who complains he has been robbed by Bardolph and Pistol.

### SCENE II

A garden of Ford's house. Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page meet together with Dame Quickly. They compare notes and find that Falstaff's letters are precisely in the same language. They decide upon some way of revenge on the fat knight. Fenton is in love with Anne, and they meet and exchange mutual vows. Anne complains that her father wants her to marry Dr. Caius, but her mother promises she shall have the man of her choice. Bardolph and Pistol come and tell Ford of Falstaff's designs on his wife and Ford resolves to have his vengeance too. It is arranged that he shall be introduced to Falstaff under a false name. The women arrange that Dame Quickly shall go to Falstaff and make an appointment for him to meet them on the morrow.

### SCENE I

Falstaff is at an inn, and Dame Quickly comes with the note making the appointment between two and three o'clock for that day. The knight is overjoyed. Ford is announced under the name of Fountain. He pretends he has come to ask Falstaff to aid him in his hopeless quest of Mrs. Ford. Falstaff agrees to help him all the more, as he has an appointment with the lady for that afternoon, while her husband is away. This news astounds Ford, who believes that his wife is deceiving him after all. He raves with jealousy, whilst Falstaff goes to don his best attire. They leave together.

### SCENE II

In Ford's house. The women have prepared everything for Falstaff's reception. Two servants enter, carrying a basket full of dirty linen. The fat knight arrives and immediately begins making love to Mistress Ford. She alternately encourages and repulses him, until Dame Quickly bustles in to say that Ford is coming in great haste. She thinks it is only an alarm meant for Falstaff, but finds it is only too true. She conceals the knight behind the screen, as Ford's voice is heard. He enters with Caius, Bardolph and Pistol, giving orders to search everywhere for the scoundrel. He himself examines the basket and then rushes out frantic. As he does this, Falstaff runs from behind the screen and squeezes into the basket, while Dame Quickly and Mrs. Ford cover him with the soiled linen. Fenton now comes in with Anne, and to be able to talk quietly they hide behind the screen. Ford and the others return and continue looking for Falstaff. Ford pitches on the screen as the place of hiding, and they surround and overturn it, only to their disgust to find the young lovers. The men again rush off looking for Falstaff, who, half suffocated, implores to be released. Mrs. Ford then calls the servants to carry the basket away. They take it to the window, balance it a moment, then throw it into the river. A loud shout is heard and Mrs. Ford takes her husband to the window to show him the fate of the gallant knight.

### SCENE I

Dame Quickly comes to the inn to express to Sir John the sorrow of Mrs. Ford over the occurrences of the day and to make a new appointment with him in Windsor Forest that night. The vain old knight falls into the trap again. The three other women overhear the conversation and make their plans, and Ford is taken into the secret this time. Dame Quickly then hears Ford promise Dr. Caius to let him have Anne as wife, immediately. She runs and tells the others.

### SCENE II

Windsor Park. Fenton and Anne arrive and pledge anew their vows. Mrs. Ford then arrives and puts a mask and cloak on Fenton. Dame Quickly is invested with a broomstick. Falstaff now comes on the scene and meets Mrs. Ford. He begins his protestations of undying love, but they are interrupted by Mistress Page, who, rushing in, cries that witches are coming. Sir John betrays the most abject fear and falls to the ground, burying his face, and the fairies enter led by Nan. Then Bardolph, Pistol, Ford and the others fall upon Falstaff and belabor him with blows, until he cries for mercy; but in the melee he recognizes Bardolph and this restores his courage. Then Falstaff owns up to his errors, and Ford and he make friends. Bardolph comes in as the Fairy Queen, hand in hand with Dr. Caius, and Mrs. Ford leads forth Anne disguised as a nymph, and Fenton in his cloak and mask. Ford unites the two couples. They then all unmask to the astonishment of Dr. Caius and to the grief of Ford, who finds he has married his daughter to the wrong man. However, he relents when he finds that there are other dupes besides himself. Ford embraces Anne and Fenton and all the characters and the chorus join in the finale.

## CHARACTERS

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Sir JOHN FALSTAFF . . . . .	Baritone
FENTON, a young gentleman . . . . .	Tenor
FORD, a wealthy burgher . . . . .	Baritone
Dr. CAIUS, a physician. . . . .	Tenor
BARDOLF . . . . .	Tenor
PISTOL . . . . .	Bass
} followers of Falstaff {	
ROBIN, a page in Ford's household . . . . .	
Mistress FORD . . . . .	Soprano
ANNE, her daughter . . . . .	Soprano
Mistress PAGE . . . . .	Mezzo-Soprano
Dame QUICKLY . . . . .	Mezzo-Soprano

Burghers and street-folk, Ford's servants, maskers,  
as elves, fairies, witches, &c.

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SCENE—WINDSOR.

TIME—REIGN OF KING HENRY IV.

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This comedy is derived from Shakespeare's "MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR," and from certain passages of "HENRY IV" having relation to the personality of Falstaff.

# ATTO PRIMO

## PARTE PRIMA.

### L'INTERNO DELL'OSTERIA DELLA GIARRETTIERA.

Una tavola. Un gran seggiolone. Una panca. Sulla tavola i resti d'un desinare, parecchie bottiglie e un bicchiere. Calamaio, penne, carta, una candela accesa. Una scopa appoggiata al muro. Uscio nel fondo, porta a sinistra.

FALSTAFF è occupato a riscaldare la cera di due lettere alla fiamma della candela, poi le suggella con un anello. Dopo averle suggellate spegne il lume e si mette a bere comodamente sdraiato sul seggiolone.

FALSTAFF, D.R CAJUS, BARDOLFO, PISTOLA, l'Oste nel fondo.

CAJUS (entrando della porta a sinistra e gridando minaccioso)  
Falstaff!

FALST. (senza abbadare alle vociferazioni del D.r Cajus, chiama l'Oste che si avvicina)  
Oilà!

CAJUS (più forte di prima)  
Sir John Falstaff!

BARD. (al Dottore) Oh! che vi piglia?!

CAJUS (sempre vociando e avvicinandosi a Falstaff che non gli dà retta)  
Hai battuto i miei servi!...

FALST. (all'Oste, che esce per eseguir l'ordine)  
Oste! un'altra bottiglia  
Di Xeres.

CAJUS (come sopra) Hai fiaccata la mia giumenta baja,  
Sforzata la mia casa.

FALST. Ma non la tua massaja.



# ACT I.

## SCENE I.

### INTERIOR OF "THE GARTER" INN.

Table, large arm-chair and bench. On the table remains of a morning meal, several bottles and a glass inkstand, pens, paper, a lighted candle. Broom leaning against the wall. Exit C, door L.

FALSTAFF, seated at the table, heats sealing-wax at the candle-flame, and with a signet-ring seals two letters; then blows out light, stretches himself out on his chair, and begins to drink at his ease.

BARDOLPH, PISTOL *and Host in attendance.*

*Enter DR. CAIUS, L., exclaiming angrily:—*

CAIUS Falstaff!

FALST. (summons Host, taking no notice of Caius)  
Mine host!

CAIUS (louder than before)  
Sir John Falstaff!

BARD. What is it ails you?

CAIUS You have beaten my servants...

FALST. Hither another flask of sherry.

CAIUS You have ridden to death my fav'rite hackney; my house  
you've broken into...

FALST. But spared your fair housekeeper.

FALSTAFF

- CAJUS Troppa grazia ! Una vecchia ciisposa. — Ampio Messere  
Se foste venti volte John Falstaff Cavaliere  
V'obbligherò a rispondermi.
- FALST. (con flemma) Ecco la mia risposta :  
*Ho fatto ciò che hai detto.*
- CAJUS E poi ?
- FALST. L'ho fatto apposta.
- CAJUS (gridando)  
M'appellerò al Consiglio Real.
- FALST. Vatti con Dio.  
Sta zitto o avrai le beffe ; quest'è il consiglio mio.
- CAJUS (ripigliando la sfuriata contro Bardolfo)  
Non è finita !!
- FALST. Al diavolo !
- CAJUS Bardolfo !
- BARD. Ser Dottore.
- CAJUS (sempre con tono minaccioso)  
Tu, jer, m'hai fatto bere.
- BARD. Pur troppo ! e che dolore !..  
(si fa tastare il polso dal D. r Cajus)  
Sto mal. D'un tuo pronostico m'assisti. Ho l'intestino  
Guasto. Malanno agli osti che dan la ca. ce al vino !  
(mettendo l'indice sul proprio naso enorme e rubicondo)  
Vedi questa meteora ?
- CAJUS La vedo.
- BARD. Essa si corca  
Rossa coel ogni notte.
- CAJUS (scoppiando) Pronostico di forca !  
M'hai fatto ber, furfante, con lui, (\*) narrando frache;  
(\* indicando Pistola)  
Poi, quando fui ben ciuschero, m'hai vuotate le tasche.
- BARD. (con decoro)  
Non io.
- CAJUS Chi fu ?
- FALST. (chiamando) Pistola !
- PIST. (avanzandosi) Padrone.
- FALST. (sempre seduto sul seggiolone e con flemma)  
Hai tu vuotate  
Le tasche a quel Messere ?
- CAJUS (scattando contro Pistola) Certo in mi. Guardate  
Come s'atteggia al niego quel ceffo da bugiardo !  
(vuotando una tasca della giubba)  
Qui c'eran due scellini del regno d'Edoardo  
E sei mezze-corone. Non ne riman più segno.

FALSTAFF

---

CAIUS Thanks for nothing; such a blear-eyed old creature! Corpulent Captain! An you were twenty times the doughty knight, John Falstaff, I'd force you to reply to me.

FALST. Hear, then, my final answer: I've done all you complain of; such was my pleasure.

CAIUS I will appeal to the Council of State.

FALST. Let well alone, sir; a laughing-stock you'll be else; such is my friendly counsel.

CAIUS It shall not end thus!

FALST. Away with you!

CAIUS Thou Bardolph!

BARD. Learned Doctor.

CAIUS Last night we drank together.

BARD. Too deeply! Sorely I've suffered all day. I prithee write me a prescription; my stomach's out of order. Accursed be the rogues who drug their liquors! See'st thou this glowing meteor? (pointing to his nose.)

CAIUS I see it.

BARD. Night after night, thus ruddy of hue it reposes!

CAIUS (violently)  
Prescription for the gallows! Thou mad'st me drink, thou villain, with him (pointing to Pistol), old stories telling, and, when my brains were fuddled quite, then you both picked my pockets.

BARD. Not I!

CAIUS Who then?

FALST. Was't thou who emptied the pockets of this worthy?

CAIUS Truly, 'twas he! Behold it, that liar's face, assuming a leer of false denial! (turning out one of his pockets.)

Herein were shillings twain  
Of good King Edward's reign,  
And six mill-groats of silver,  
Ah which these knaves did pilfer!