



# ALL'S Well, that Ends Well.

Actus primus. Scena Prima.

Enter young Bertram Count of Rossilion, his Mother, and Helena, Lord Lafew, all in blacke.

Mother.

**H**OW deliuering my sonne from me, I burie a second husband.

**Ros.** And I in going Madam, weep ore my fathers death anew; but I must attend his maiesties command, to whom I am now in Ward, ouermore in subiection.

**Laf.** You shall find of the King a husband Madame, you sir a father. He that so generally is at all times good, must of necessitie hold his vertue to you, whose worthinesse would stirre it vp where it wanted rather then lacke it where there is such abundance.

**Mo.** What hope is there of his Maiesties amendment? **Laf.** He hath abandon'd his Phisitions Madam, vnder whose practise he hath persecuted time with hope, and finds no other advantage in the procelle, but onely the loosing of hope by time.

**Mo.** This young Gentlewoman had a father, O that had, how sad a passage tis, whose skill was almost as great as his honestie, had it stretch'd so far, would haue made nature immortal, and death should haue play for lacke of worke. Would for the Kings sake hee were liuing, I thinke it would be the death of the Kings disease.

**Laf.** How call'd you the man you speake of Madam? **Mo.** He was famous sic in his profession, and it was his great right to be so: Gerard de Narbon.

**Laf.** He was excellent indeed Madam, the King very latched spoke of him admiringly, and mourningly: hee was skillfull enough to haue liu'd still, if knowledge could be set vp against mortallitie.

**Ros.** What is it (my good Lord) the King languishes of?

**Laf.** A Fistula my Lord.

**Ros.** I heard not of it before.

**Laf.** I would it were not notorious. Was this Gentlewoman the Daughter of Gerard de Narbon?

**Mo.** His sole childe my Lord, and bequeathed to my ouer looking. I haue those hopes of her good, that her education promises her dispositions shee inherits, which makes faire gifts faire: for where an vnclene mind carries vertuous qualities, there commendations go with pity, they are vertues and traitors too: in her they are the better for their simplenesse; she derides her honestie,

and atcheues her goodnesse.

**Lafew.** Your commendations Madam get from her teares.

**Mo.** 'Tis the best brine a Maiden can season her paine in. The remembrance of her father neuer approaches her heart, but the tyranny of her sorrowes takes all liuelihood from her cheek. No more of this Helena, go too, to more least it be rather thought you affect a sorrow, than to haue—

**Hel.** I doe affect a sorrow indeed, but I haue it too.

**Laf.** Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead, excessive grieue the enemy to the liuing.

**Mo.** If the liuing be enemy to the grieue, the excellent makes it some mortall.

**Ros.** Maddam I desire your holie wishes.

**Laf.** How vnderstand we that?

**Mo.** Be thou blest Bertram, and succeed thy father in manners as in shape: thy blood and vertue contend for Empire in thee, and thy goodnesse share with thy birth-right. Loue all, trust a few, Doe wrong to none: be able for thine enemy Rather in power then vse: and keepe thy friend Vnder thy owne lifes key. Be cheere for silence, But neuer tax'd for speech, What heauen more wilt, That thee may furnish, and my prayers plucke downe, Fall on thy head, Farewell my Lord, 'Tis an vnseason'd Courtier, good my Lord Adulter him.

**Laf.** He cannot want the best That shall attend his loue.

**Mo.** Heauen blese him: Farewell Bertram.

**Ros.** The best wishes that can be forg'd in your thought be seruants to you: be comfortable to my mother, your Mistress, and make much of her.

**Laf.** Farewell prettie Lady, you must hold the credit of your father.

**Hel.** O were that all, I thinke not on my father, And these great teares grace his remembrance more

Then those I shed for him. What was he like?

I haue forgot him, My imagination Carries no fauour in't but Bertram,

I am vnstone, there is no liuing, none, If Bertram be away. 'Twere all one,

That I should loue a bright particuler starre, And think to wed it, he is so aboue me

In his bright radiance and colateral light,

Must I be comforted, not in his sphere;

The ambition in my loue thus plagues it selfe;

The hind that would be mated by the Lion

Must die for loue: 'Twas prettie, though a plague

To see him creepe houre to sit and draw

His Cobred browes, his hawking eie, his curles

In a clearest table: heart too capable

Of euery line and stroke of his sweet fauour;

But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancie

Keeps sanctitie his Reliques: Who comes heere?

Enter Parrolles.

One that goes with him: I loue him for his sake,

And yet I know him a poisonous Liar,

Thinke him a great way foole, folie a coward,

Put these sixe euils sic to sic in him,

That they take place, when Vertues steely bones

Looks bleake with cold wind: with all, full of we see

Cold wisdom weighing on superfluous follie.

**Par.** Saue you faire Queene.

**Hel.** And you Monarch.

**Par.** No.

**Hel.** And no.

**Par.** Are you meditating on virginitie?

**Hel.** If you haue some staine of soldier in you: Let me aske you a question. Man is enemy to virginitie,

how may we barraadoe it against him?

**Par.** Keep him out.

**Hel.** But he affaies, and our virginitie though valiant,

in the defence yet is weak: vnfold to vs some warlike resistance.

**Par.** There is none: Man setting downe before you,

will vndermine you, and blow you vp.

**Hel.** Blesse our poore Virginity from vnderminers

and blowers vp: Is there no Military policy how Virgins might blow vp men?

**Par.** Virginity being blowne downe, Man will

quicker be blowne vp: many in blowing him downe

againe, with the breach your selues made, you lose your

Clipp. It is not politicke, in the Common-wealth of

Nature, to preferre virginity. Losse of Virginity, is

rationall excreasce, and there was neuer Virgin got, till

virginity was first lost. That you were made of, is mettal

to make Virgins. Virginity, by being once lost,

may be ten times found: by being euer kept, it is euer

lost: 'tis too cold a companion: Away with it.

**Hel.** I will stand for't a little, though therefore I die

a Virgin.

**Par.** There's little can be saide in't, 'tis against the

rule of Nature. To speake on the part of virginity, is

to accuse your Mothers; which is most infallible diso-

bedience. He that hangs himselfe is a Virgin: Virginitie

murthers it selfe, and should be buried in highwayes

out of all sanctified limits, as a desperate Offendresse a-

gainst Nature. Virginity breeds mites, much like a

Cheese, consumes it selfe to the very paying, and so

dies with feeding his owne stomacke. Besides, Virginitie

is peccish, proud, ydle, made of selfe-love, which

is the most inhibited sinne in the Canon. Keepe it not,

you cannot choose but loose by't. Our with't: within

ten yeare it will make it selfe two, which is a goodly in-

crease, and the principall it selfe not much the worse.

Away with it.

**Hel.** How might one do sir, to loose it to her owne

liking?

**Par.** Let mee see. Marry ill, so like him that ne're

it likes. 'Tis a commodity wil lose the glosse with syngs

The longer kept, the lesse worth: Off with't while 'tis

vendible. Answer the time of request, Virginity like

an olde Courtier, weares her cap out of fashion, richly

fined, but vnuseable, iust like the brooch & the tooth-

pick, which were not now: your Date is better in your

Pye and your Portredge, then in your cheek: and your

virginity, your old virginity, is like one of our French

wither'd peares, it looks ill, it eates drily, marry 'tis a

wither'd peare: it was formerly better, marry yet 'tis a

wither'd peare: Will you any thing with it?

**Hel.** No: my virginity yet.

There shall your Master haue a thousand loues,

A Mother, and a Mistresse, and a friend,

A Phoenix, Capitaine, and an enemy,

A guide, a Goddesse, and a Soueraigne,

A Counsellor, a Traitorese, and a Deare:

His humble ambition, proud humilitie:

His arring, concord: and his discord, delcet:

His faith, his weere disaster: with a world

Of pretty fond adoptions christendomes

That blinking Cupid gossip. Now shall hee

I know not what he shall, God send him well,

The Courts a learning place, and he is one.

**Par.** What one, sayst?

**Hel.** That I will well, 'tis pity.

**Par.** What's pity?

**Hel.** That wishing well had not a body in't,

Which might be felt, that we the poorer borne,

Whose baler starres do shut vs vp in wishes,

Might wish effects of them follow our friends,

And shew what wee alone must thinke, which neuer

Returns vs thanks.

Enter Page.

**Page.** Monsieur Parrolles,

My Lord calls for you.

**Par.** Little Helens farewell, if I can remember thee, I

will thinke of thee at Court.

**Hel.** Monsieur Parrolles, you were borne vnder a

charitable starre.

**Par.** Vnder Mars I.

**Hel.** I especially thinke, vnder Mars.

**Par.** Why vnder Mars?

**Hel.** The warres hath so kept you vnder, that you

must needs be borne vnder Mars.

**Par.** When he was predominant,

**Hel.** When he was retrograde I thinke rather.

**Par.** Why thinke you so?

**Hel.** You go so much backward when you fight.

**Par.** That's for aduantage.

**Hel.** So it running away,

When feare proposes the safetie:

But the composition that your valour and feare makes

in you, is a vertue of a good wing, and I like the

weare well.

**Parol.** I am so full of businesse, I cannot answer

thee acutely: I will returne perfect Courtier, in the

which my instruction shall serue to naturalize thee, so

thou wilt be capable of a Courtiers counsell, and vnder-

stand what aduice shall thrust vpon thee, else thou

dierst in thine vnthankfulness, and thine ignorance makes

thee away, farewell: When thou hast leisure, say thy

praises: when thou hast none, remember thy Friends:

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Shakespeare's First Folio (*Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies: published according to the true originall copies*. London: Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount, 1623) contained thirty-six of Shakespeare's plays. *All's Well That Ends Well* is grouped with the Comedies. *All's Well That Ends Well* was first published in First Folio, and this version is the basis for all other editions.

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