

All's Well That Ends Well

2.4

Enter Helen reading a letter, and Lavatch the clown

HELEN

My mother greets me kindly. Is she well?

LAVATCH She is not well, but yet she has her health. She's very merry, but yet she is not well. But thanks be given she's very well and wants nothing i'th' world. But yet she is not well. 5

HELEN

If she be very well, what does she ail
That she's not very well?

LAVATCH Truly, she's very well indeed, but for two things.

HELEN What two things?

LAVATCH One, that she's not in heaven, whither God send 10
her quickly. The other, that she's in earth, from whence
God send her quickly.

Enter Paroles

PAROLES Bless you, my fortunate lady.

HELEN

I hope, sir, I have your good will to have
Mine own good fortunes. 15

PAROLES You had my prayers to lead them on, and to
keep them on have them still.±±O my knave, how does
my old lady?

LAVATCH So that you had her wrinkles and I her money,
I would she did as you say. 20

PAROLES Why, I say nothing.

LAVATCH Marry, you are the wiser man, for many a
man's tongue shakes out his master's undoing. To say
nothing, to do nothing, to know nothing, and to have
nothing, is to be a great part of your title, which is 25
within a very little of nothing.

PAROLES Away, thou'rt a knave.

LAVATCH You should have said, sir, `Before a knave,
thou'rt a knave'±±that's `Before me, thou'rt a knave'.
This had been truth, sir. 30

PAROLES Go to, thou art a witty fool. I have found thee.

LAVATCH Did you find me in yourself, sir, or were you
taught to find me?

[PAROLES] In myself, knave.

LAVATCH The search, sir, was profitable, and much fool 35
may you find in you, even to the world's pleasure and
the increase of laughter.

PAROLES *(to Helen)* A good knave, i'faith, and well fed.
Madam, my lord will go away tonight.
A very serious business calls on him. 40
The great prerogative and rite of love,
Which as your due time claims, he does acknowledge,
But puts it off to a compelled restraint:
Whose want and whose delay is strewn with sweets,
Which they distil now in the curfew time, 45
To make the coming hour o'erflow with joy,
And pleasure drown the brim.

HELEN What's his will else?

PAROLES
That you will take your instant leave o'th' King,
And make this haste as your own good proceeding,
Strengthened with what apology you think 50
May make it probable need.

HELEN What more commands he?

PAROLES
That having this obtained, you presently
Attend his further pleasure.

HELEN In everything
I wait upon his will.

PAROLES I shall report it so.

HELEN I pray you. 55

[Exit Paroles at one door]

Come, sirrah.

Exeunt [at another door]