

All's Well That Ends Well

2.1

Flourish of cornetts. Enter the King [carried in a chair], with the two Lords Dumaine, divers young lords taking leave for the Florentine war, and Bertram and Paroles

KING

Farewell, young lords. These warlike principles
Do not throw from you. And you, my lords, farewell.
Share the advice betwixt you; if both gain all,
The gift doth stretch itself as 'tis received,
And is enough for both.

FIRST LORD DUMAINE 'Tis our hope, sir, 5
After well-entered soldiers, to return
And find your grace in health.

KING

No, no, it cannot be±±and yet my heart
Will not confess he owes the malady
That doth my life besiege. Farewell, young lords. 10
Whether I live or die, be you the sons
Of worthy Frenchmen; let higher Italy±±
Those bated that inherit but the fall
Of the last monarchy±±see that you come
Not to woo honour but to wed it. When 15
The bravest questant shrinks, find what you seek,
That fame may cry you loud. I say farewell.

FIRST LORD DUMAINE
Health at your bidding serve your majesty.

KING

Those girls of Italy, take heed of them.
They say our French lack language to deny 20
If they demand. Beware of being captives
Before you serve.

BOTH LORDS DUMAINE Our hearts receive your warnings.

KING Farewell.±±Come hither to me.
[Some lords stand aside with the King]

FIRST LORD DUMAINE *(to Bertram)*
O my sweet lord, that you will stay behind us.

PAROLES

'Tis not his fault, the spark.

SECOND LORD DUMAINE

O 'tis brave wars. 25

PAROLES

Most admirable! I have seen those wars.

BERTRAM

I am commanded here, and kept a coil with

`Too young' and `the next year' and `tis too early'.

PAROLES

An thy mind stand to't, boy, steal away bravely.

BERTRAM

I shall stay here the forehorse to a smock,

30

Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,

Till honour be bought up, and no sword worn

But one to dance with. By heaven, I'll steal away.

FIRST LORD DUMAINE

There's honour in the theft.

PAROLES

Commit it, Count.

SECOND LORD DUMAINE

I am your accessory. And so, farewell.

35

BERTRAM I grow to you,

And our parting is a tortured body.

FIRST LORD DUMAINE

Farewell, captain.

SECOND LORD DUMAINE

Sweet Monsieur Paroles.

PAROLES Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin. Good

sparks and lustrous, a word, good mettles. You shall 40

find in the regiment of the Spinii one Captain Spurio,

with his cicatrice, an emblem of war, here on his

sinister cheek. It was this very sword entrenched it.

Say to him I live, and observe his reports for me.

FIRST LORD DUMAINE

We shall, noble captain. 45

PAROLES Mars dote on you for his novices.

Exeunt both Lords Dumaine

(To Bertram) What will ye do?

BERTRAM Stay the King.

PAROLES Use a more spacious ceremony to the noble lords.

You have restrained yourself within the list of too cold 50

an adieu. Be more expressive to them, for they wear

themselves in the cap of the time, there do muster true

gait; eat, speak, and move under the influence of the

most received star⁺⁺and though the devil lead the
measure, such are to be followed. After them, and take 55
a more dilated farewell.

BERTRAM And I will do so.

PAROLES Worthy fellows, and like to prove most sinewy
sword-men.

Exeunt [Bertram and Paroles]

Enter Lafeu to the King

LAFEU *(kneeling)*

Pardon, my lord, for me and for my tidings. 60

KING I'll fee thee to stand up.

LAFEU *(rising)*

Then here's a man stands that has bought his pardon.
I would you had kneeled, my lord, to ask me mercy,
And that at my bidding you could so stand up.

KING

I would I had, so I had broke thy pate 65
And asked thee mercy for't.

LAFEU Good faith, across!

But my good lord, 'tis thus: will you be cured
Of your infirmity?

KING No.

LAFEU O will you eat

No grapes, my royal fox? Yes, but you will,
My noble grapes, an if my royal fox 70
Could reach them. I have seen a medicine
That's able to breathe life into a stone,
Quicken a rock, and make you dance canary
With sprightly fire and motion; whose simple touch
Is powerful to araise King PeÂpin, nay, 75
To give great Charlemagne a pen in's hand,
And write to her a love-line.

KING What `her' is this?

LAFEU

Why, Doctor She. My lord, there's one arrived,
If you will see her. Now by my faith and honour,
If seriously I may convey my thoughts 80
In this my light deliverance, I have spoke
With one that in her sex, her years, profession,
Wisdom and constancy, hath amazed me more

Than I dare blame my weakness. Will you see her±±
For that is her demand±±and know her business? 85
That done, laugh well at me.

KING Now, good Lafeu,
Bring in the admiration, that we with thee
May spend our wonder too, or take off thine
By wond'ring how thou took'st it.

LAFEU Nay, I'll fit you,
And not be all day neither. 90
[He goes to the door]

KING Thus he his special nothing ever prologues.

LAFEU *(to Helen, within)* Nay, come your ways.
Enter Helen [disguised]

KING This haste hath wings indeed.

LAFEU *(to Helen)* Nay, come your ways.
This is his majesty. Say your mind to him. 95
A traitor you do look like, but such traitors
His majesty seldom fears. I am Cressid's uncle,
That dare leave two together. Fare you well.
Exeunt [all but the King and Helen]

KING Now, fair one, does your business follow us?

HELEN Ay, my good lord. GeÂrard de Narbonne was my father; 100
In what he did profess, well found.

KING I knew him.

HELEN The rather will I spare my praises towards him;
Knowing him is enough. On's bed of death
Many receipts he gave me, chiefly one
Which, as the dearest issue of his practice, 105
And of his old experience th'only darling,
He bade me store up as a triple eye
Safer than mine own two, more dear. I have so,
And hearing your high majesty is touched
With that malignant cause wherein the honour 110
Of my dear father's gift stands chief in power,
I come to tender it and my appliance
With all bound humbleness.

KING We thank you, maiden,
But may not be so credulous of cure,
When our most learneÁd doctors leave us, and 115
The congregated College have concluded
That labouring art can never ransom nature
From her inaidable estate. I say we must not
So stain our judgement or corrupt our hope,
To prostitute our past-cure malady 120
To empirics, or to dissever so
Our great self and our credit, to esteem
A senseless help, when help past sense we deem.

HELEN
My duty then shall pay me for my pains.
I will no more enforce mine office on you, 125
Humbly entreating from your royal thoughts
A modest one to bear me back again.

KING
I cannot give thee less, to be called grateful.
Thou thought'st to help me, and such thanks I give
As one near death to those that wish him live. 130
But what at full I know, thou know'st no part;
I knowing all my peril, thou no art.

HELEN
What I can do can do no hurt to try,
Since you set up your rest 'gainst remedy.
He that of greatest works is finisher 135
Oft does them by the weakest minister.
So holy writ in babes hath judgement shown
When judges have been babes; great floods have
flow'n
From simple sources, and great seas have dried.
When miracles have by th' great'st been denied 140
□
Oft expectation fails, and most oft there
Where most it promises, and oft it hits
Where hope is coldest and despair most fits.

KING
I must not hear thee. Fare thee well, kind maid. 145
Thy pains, not used, must by thyself be paid:
Proffers not took reap thanks for their reward.

HELEN

InspireÁd merit so by breath is barred.
It is not so with him that all things knows
As 'tis with us that square our guess by shows; 150
But most it is presumption in us when
The help of heaven we count the act of men.
Dear sir, to my endeavours give consent.
Of heaven, not me, make an experiment.
I am not an impostor, that proclaim 155
Myself against the level of mine aim,
But know I think, and think I know most sure,
My art is not past power, nor you past cure.

KING

Art thou so confident? Within what space
Hop'st thou my cure?

HELEN The great'st grace lending grace, 160

Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring
Their fiery coacher his diurnal ring,
Ere twice in murk and occidental damp
Moist Hesperus hath quenched her sleepy lamp,
Or four-and-twenty times the pilot's glass 165
Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass,
What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly,
Health shall live free, and sickness freely die.

KING

Upon thy certainty and confidence
What dar'st thou venture?

HELEN Tax of impudence, 170

A strumpet's boldness, a divulgeÁd shame;
Traduced by odious ballads, my maiden's name
Seared otherwise, nay±±worse of worst±±extended
With vilest torture, let my life be ended.

KING

Methinks in thee some blesseÁd spirit doth speak, 175
His powerful sound within an organ weak;
And what impossibility would slay
In common sense, sense saves another way.
Thy life is dear, for all that life can rate
Worth name of life in thee hath estimate: 180
Youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, all

That happiness and prime can happy call.
Thou this to hazard needs must intimate
Skill infinite, or monstrous desperate.
Sweet practiser, thy physic I will try, 185
That ministers thine own death if I die.

HELEN

If I break time, or flinch in property
Of what I spoke, unpitied let me die,
And well deserved. Not helping, death's my fee.
But if I help, what do you promise me? 190

KING

Make thy demand.

HELEN But will you make it even?

KING

Ay, by my sceptre and my hopes of heaven.

HELEN

Then shalt thou give me with thy kingly hand
What husband in thy power I will command.
Exempted be from me the arrogance 195
To choose from forth the royal blood of France,
My low and humble name to propagate
With any branch or image of thy state;
But such a one, thy vassal, whom I know
Is free for me to ask, thee to bestow. 200

KING

Here is my hand. The premises observed,
Thy will by my performance shall be served.
So make the choice of thy own time, for I,
Thy resolved patient, on thee still rely.
More should I question thee, and more I must, 205
Though more to know could not be more to trust:
From whence thou cam'st, how tended on±±but rest
Unquestioned welcome, and undoubted blessed.±±
Give me some help here, ho! If thou proceed
As high as word, my deed shall match thy deed. 210

Flourish. Exeunt the King, [carried], and Helen