

# All's Well That Ends Well

## 3.2

*Enter the Countess with a letter, and Lavatch*

**COUNTESS** It hath happened all as I would have had it,  
save that he comes not along with her.

**LAVATCH** By my troth, I take my young lord to be a very  
melancholy man.

**COUNTESS** By what observance, I pray you? 5

**LAVATCH** Why, he will look upon his boot and sing, mend  
the ruff and sing, ask questions and sing, pick his teeth  
and sing. I know a man that had this trick of  
melancholy sold a goodly manor for a song.

**COUNTESS** Let me see what he writes, and when he means 10  
to come.

*She opens the letter and reads*

**LAVATCH** (*aside*) I have no mind to Isabel since I was at  
court. Our old lings and our Isbels o'th' country are  
nothing like your old ling and your Isbels o'th' court.  
The brains of my Cupid's knocked out, and I begin to 15  
love as an old man loves money: with no stomach.

**COUNTESS** What have we here?

**LAVATCH** E'en that you have there.

*Exit*

**COUNTESS** (*reads the letter aloud*) 'I have sent you a  
daughter-in-law. She hath recovered the King and 20  
undone me. I have wedded her, not bedded her, and  
sworn to make the <sup>a</sup>not<sup>o</sup> eternal. You shall hear I am  
run away; know it before the report come. If there be  
breadth enough in the world I will hold a long distance.  
My duty to you. 25

Your unfortunate son,  
Bertram.'

This is not well, rash and unbridled boy,  
To fly the favours of so good a King,  
To pluck his indignation on thy head 30  
By the misprizing of a maid too virtuous  
For the contempt of empire.

*Enter Lavatch*

**LAVATCH** O madam, yonder is heavy news within,  
between two soldiers and my young lady.

**COUNTESS** What is the matter? 35

**LAVATCH** Nay, there is some comfort in the news, some  
comfort. Your son will not be killed so soon as I thought  
he would.

**COUNTESS** Why should he be killed?

**LAVATCH** So say I, madam±±if he run away, as I hear he 40  
does. The danger is in standing to't; that's the loss of  
men, though it be the getting of children. Here they  
come will tell you more. For my part, I only heard  
your son was run away.

*[Exit]*

*Enter Helen with a letter, and the two Lords  
Dumaine*

**SECOND LORD DUMAINE** *(to the Countess)*

Save you, good madam. 45

**HELEN**

Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone.

**FIRST LORD DUMAINE** Do not say so.

**COUNTESS** *(to Helen)*

Think upon patience.±±Pray you, gentlemen,  
I have felt so many quirks of joy and grief  
That the first face of neither on the start 50  
Can woman me unto't. Where is my son, I pray you?

**FIRST LORD DUMAINE**

Madam, he's gone to serve the Duke of Florence.  
We met him thitherward, for thence we came,  
And, after some dispatch in hand at court,  
Thither we bend again. 55

**HELEN**

Look on his letter, madam: here's my passport.

*[She] reads aloud*

`When thou canst get the ring upon my finger, which  
never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of  
thy body that I am father to, then call me husband;  
but in such a <sup>a</sup>then<sup>o</sup> I write a <sup>a</sup>never<sup>o</sup>.' 60  
This is a dreadful sentence.

**COUNTESS**

Brought you this letter, gentlemen?

**FIRST LORD DUMAINE** Ay, madam,  
And for the contents' sake are sorry for our pains.

**COUNTESS**

I prithee, lady, have a better cheer.  
If thou engrossest all the griefs are thine 65  
Thou robb'st me of a moiety. He was my son,  
But I do wash his name out of my blood,  
And thou art all my child.±±Towards Florence is he?

**FIRST LORD DUMAINE**

Ay, madam.

**COUNTESS** And to be a soldier?

**FIRST LORD DUMAINE**

Such is his noble purpose, and±±believe't±± 70  
The Duke will lay upon him all the honour  
That good convenience claims.

**COUNTESS**

Return you thither?

**SECOND LORD DUMAINE**

Ay, madam, with the swiftest wing of speed.

**HELEN** 'Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.'

'Tis bitter. 75

**COUNTESS** Find you that there?

**HELEN** Ay, madam.

**SECOND LORD DUMAINE**

'Tis but the boldness of his hand,  
Haply, which his heart was not consenting to.

**COUNTESS**

Nothing in France until he have no wife? 80  
There's nothing here that is too good for him  
But only she, and she deserves a lord  
That twenty such rude boys might tend upon  
And call her, hourly, mistress. Who was with him?

**SECOND LORD DUMAINE**

A servant only, and a gentleman 85  
Which I have sometime known.

**COUNTESS** Paroles, was it not?

**SECOND LORD DUMAINE** Ay, my good lady, he.

**COUNTESS**

A very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness.  
My son corrupts a well-deriveÁd nature 90  
With his inducement.

**SECOND LORD DUMAINE** Indeed, good lady,

The fellow has a deal of that too much,  
Which holds him much to have.

**COUNTESS** You're welcome, gentlemen.

I will entreat you when you see my son  
To tell him that his sword can never win 95  
The honour that he loses. More I'll entreat you  
Written to bear along.

**FIRST LORD DUMAINE** We serve you, madam,  
In that and all your worthiest affairs.

**COUNTESS**  
Not so, but as we change our courtesies.  
Will you draw near? 100

*Exeunt all but Helen*

**HELEN** 'Till I have no wife I have nothing in France.'  
Nothing in France until he has no wife.  
Thou shalt have none, Roussillon, none in France;  
Then hast thou all again. Poor lord, is't I  
That chase thee from thy country and expose 105  
Those tender limbs of thine to the event  
Of the none-sparing war? And is it I  
That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou  
Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark  
Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers 110  
That ride upon the violent speed of fire,  
Fly with false aim, cleave the still-piecing air  
That sings with piercing, do not touch my lord.  
Whoever shoots at him, I set him there.  
Whoever charges on his forward breast, 115  
I am the caitiff that do hold him to't,  
And though I kill him not, I am the cause  
His death was so effected. Better 'twere  
I met the ravin lion when he roared  
With sharp constraint of hunger; better 'twere 120  
That all the miseries which nature owes  
Were mine at once. No, come thou home, Roussillon,  
Whence honour but of danger wins a scar,  
As oft it loses all. I will be gone;  
My being here it is that holds thee hence. 125  
Shall I stay here to do't? No, no, although  
The air of paradise did fan the house

And angels officed all. I will be gone,  
That pitiful rumour may report my flight  
To console thine ear. Come night, end day;  
For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away.

*Exit*